

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

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USMISSION NATO

USUN NEW YORK 1036

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USCINCEUR

CINCUSAREUR

USNMR SHAPE

AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI

S E C R E T ATHENS 3219

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, TU, GR

SUBJECT: GREEK-TURKISH AEGEAN DISPUTE

1. ACCORDING TO EMBASSY'S UNDERSTANDING DURING SPECIAL
UNGA LAST MONTH GREEK AND TURKISH REPRESENTATIVES REACHED
AGREEMENT ON NEED FOR TALKS ON AEGEAN. AT THAT TIME
WE UNDERSTOOD TURKISH POSITION TO BE THAT IF TALKS TOOK
PLACE TURKEY WOULD DEFER PLANS TO SEND SEISMIC OR DRILLING
SHIP INTO AEGEAN. IT NOW APPEARS, HOWEVER, THAT SEISMIC
VESSEL, REPORTEDLY U.S. SHIP UNDER CHARTER TO TURKS,
MAY BE MOVING FROM BLACK SEA INTO AEGEAN. THERE ARE
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SOME INDICATIONS THAT GREEKS PROBABLY WOULD NOT

INTERFERE WITH VESSEL WHOSE FUNCTION WAS STRICTLY SCIENTIFIC, I.E. SEISMIC OR OCEANOGRAPHIC RESEARCH, BUT AT SAME TIME GREEK POSITION BLURRED BY COMMENT THAT GREEK WOULD HAVE TO BE ON BOARD SUCH VESSEL, PRESUMABLY TO INSURE IT DID NOT EXCEED ANNOUNCED SCIENTIFIC FUNCTIONS. WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF A GREEK NOT ABOARD REMAINS A POINT OF CONCERN. MOREOVER, WHAT REMAINS OF TSOUNIS' UNDERSTANDING IN NEW YORK (NOTED ABOVE) THAT IF TALKS TOOK PLACE GREECE AND TURKEY WOULD NOT MOVE AHEAD TO ASSERT WHAT IT BELIEVES TO BE ITS RIGHTS. FURTHERMORE, THERE IS ALSO PRESENT THE DANGER OF CONTACT AND CLASH ARISING SIMPLY THROUGH LEVEL OF EMOTIONS AND EXPLOSIVE REACTION.

2. BECAUSE OF CONTINUING RISK OF MISCALCULATION ON BOTH SIDES, WE BELIEVE IT IS IN MUTUAL US AND NATO INTEREST FOR U.S. AND OUR ALLIES TO MAINTAIN POSTURE OF ENCOURAGING DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN PARTIES. OUR UNDERSTANDING IS, AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, THAT MILITARY LEADERSHIP IN ATHENS HAS FOR TIME BEING GIVEN DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIVES FIRST CHANCE TO SEEK PEACEFUL SOLUTION. CONSEQUENTLY, ANYTHING THAT CAN BE DONE TO IMPROVE PROSPECT FOR SUCCESS IN THIS CHANNEL SHOULD BE GIVEN PRIORITY.

3. WE ASSUME FIRST OPPORTUNITY FOR GREEK-TURKISH TALKS LIKELY TO BE NATO MINISTERIAL JUNE 18-19. THIS COULD BE TOO LATE. I BELIEVE IT DESIRABLE THEREFORE FOR ANKARA TO PROBE GOT REGARDING ITS PRESENT INTENTIONS. WE SHARE EMBASSY ANKARA'S VIEW THAT IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE FOR ANY AMERICAN FIRM CONTEMPLATING CONTRACT WITH GOT TO BE ADVISED OF IMMEDIATE RISK OF ENGAGING IN AEGEAN OPERATIONS PRIOR TO TALKS. ADDITIONALLY FROM EMBASSY ATHENS VIEWPOINT, WE BELIEVE IT BETTER FOR AMERICAN FIRM NOT TO UNDERTAKE SUCH CONTRACT WITH GOT PENDING OUTCOME OF FURTHER CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN REPRESENTATIVES BOTH STATES.

4. COMMENT: COMMENCING LAST SUNDAY, CHIEF EDITOR OF DAILY GREEK-LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER ELEFTHEROS COSMOS,
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MRS. ALEXANDRA STEFANOPOULOU, INITIATED A SERIES OF ARTICLES CONCERNING GREEK-TURKISH DIFFERENCES REGARDING QUESTION CONTINENTAL SHELF. BECAUSE ELEFTHEROS COSMOS APPARENTLY GENERALLY FAVORABLE TO CURRENT REGIME, THIS SERIES COULD BE CONSTRUED AS "GOVERNMENT HANDOUT". ARTICLES TO DATE PURPORT TO PRESENT BOTH TURKISH AND GREEK POSITIONS ON ISSUE AS WELL AS INTERPRET 1958 CONVENTION ON CONTINENTAL SHELF. SERIES RATHER

TENDENTIOUS IN TONE AND GIVES IMPRESSION OF PRESENTING
PRIMA FACIE CASE IN SUPPORT GOG POSITION. INTER ALIA,
IT ATTEMPTS KNOCK OUT TURKISH CONTENTION THAT ISLANDS
CONSTITUTE "SPECIAL CASE" WITHIN ARTICLE 6 OF 1958
CONVENTION. FULL TEXTS OF ARTICLES WILL BE TRANSMITTED
BY AIRGRAM.
TASCA

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